

# Integrated Plan to Address Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs of Disadvantaged Communities in the Salinas Valley and Greater Monterey County IRWM Region

Greater Monterey County  
Integrated Regional Water Management Program

Funded by:

California State Water Resources Control Board

*Waste Discharge Permit Fund*

*Grant Agreement No. 14-651-550 and*

*Grant Agreement No. D1611302*

*Plan Approved on November 8, 2017*

# Acknowledgements

- **Project Team**
  - **Environmental Justice Coalition for Water**
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  - **Rural Community Assistance Corporation:** Karen McBride
  - **San Jerardo Cooperative Inc.:** Horacio Amezquita
- **Community Members**
- **Community Engineering Corps**
- **Data Management and Mapping**
- **Technical Advisory Committee**

# Project Overview



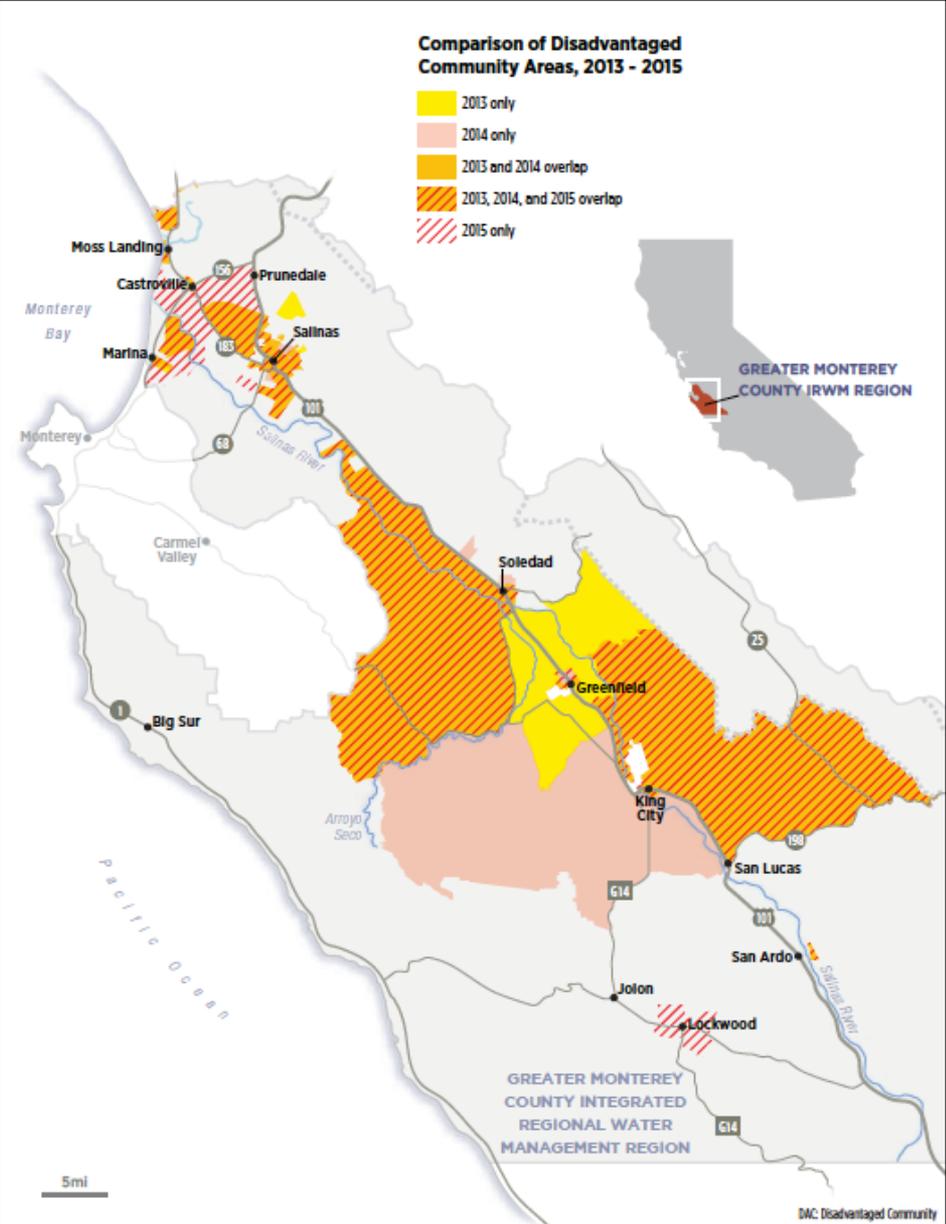
## Project Objectives & Associated Tasks

1. Identify disadvantaged communities within the planning region, with a focus on small disadvantaged communities in unincorporated areas.
2. Identify drinking water and wastewater problems.
3. Develop a comprehensive inventory and database and create maps.
4. Identify potential solutions for (at minimum) each “high priority” community.
5. Work with each community to determine preferred solution(s).
6. Develop conceptual project descriptions and cost estimates for the “high priority” communities.
7. Identify potential funding sources for the proposed projects and for broader regional solutions.

# Identifying Disadvantaged Communities



# Identifying Disadvantaged Communities

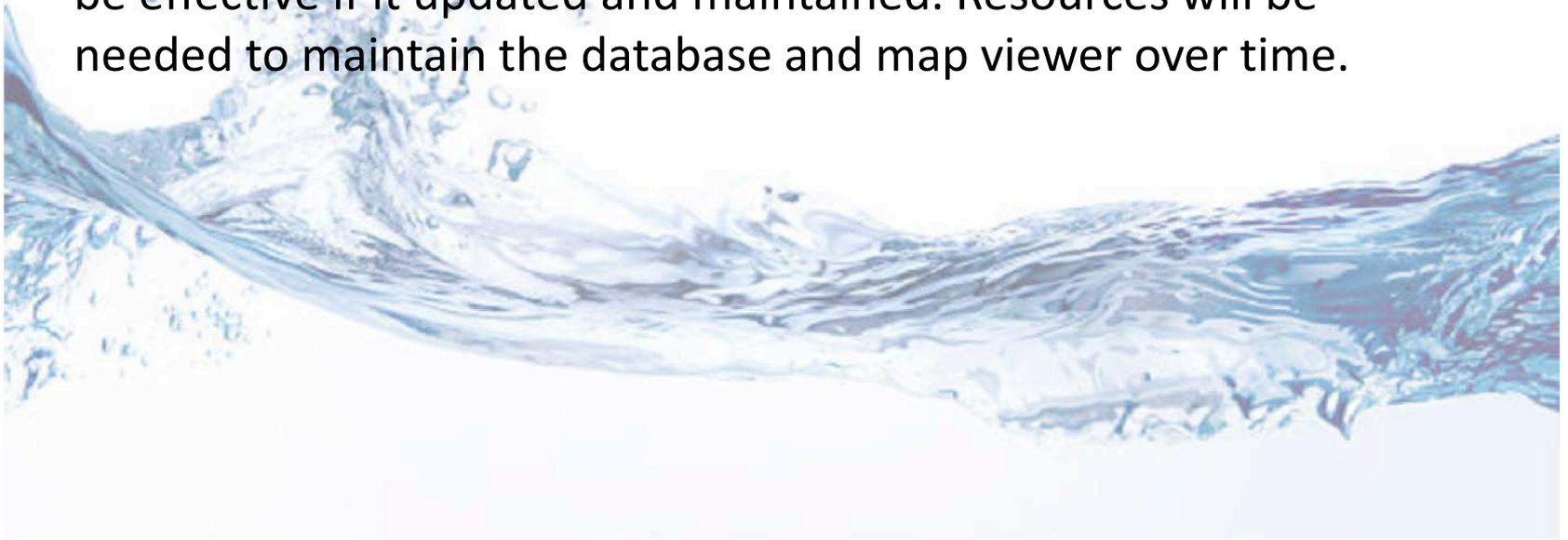


## *Identifying Disadvantaged Communities: Key Findings*

*1) Importance of MHI surveys.* The MHI surveys conducted as part of this project and other efforts confirm what is already known: that there are many “hidden” disadvantaged communities, located within higher income census tracts and block groups. These communities will remain as “suspected” disadvantaged communities – and will be ineligible for many grants and loans targeted to low-income communities – unless their “disadvantaged” status can be proven. Resources are therefore needed to conduct MHI surveys for the remaining “suspected” disadvantaged communities within the region, and for those identified into the future.

## *Identifying Disadvantaged Communities: Key Findings*

*2) Importance of maintaining the Greater Monterey County Community Water Tool database and mapping tool:* The database and map viewer created as part of this project offers a powerful tool for the Greater Monterey County Regional Water Management Group, local agencies, and non-profit community assistance organizations; however, this tool will only continue to be effective if it updated and maintained. Resources will be needed to maintain the database and map viewer over time.



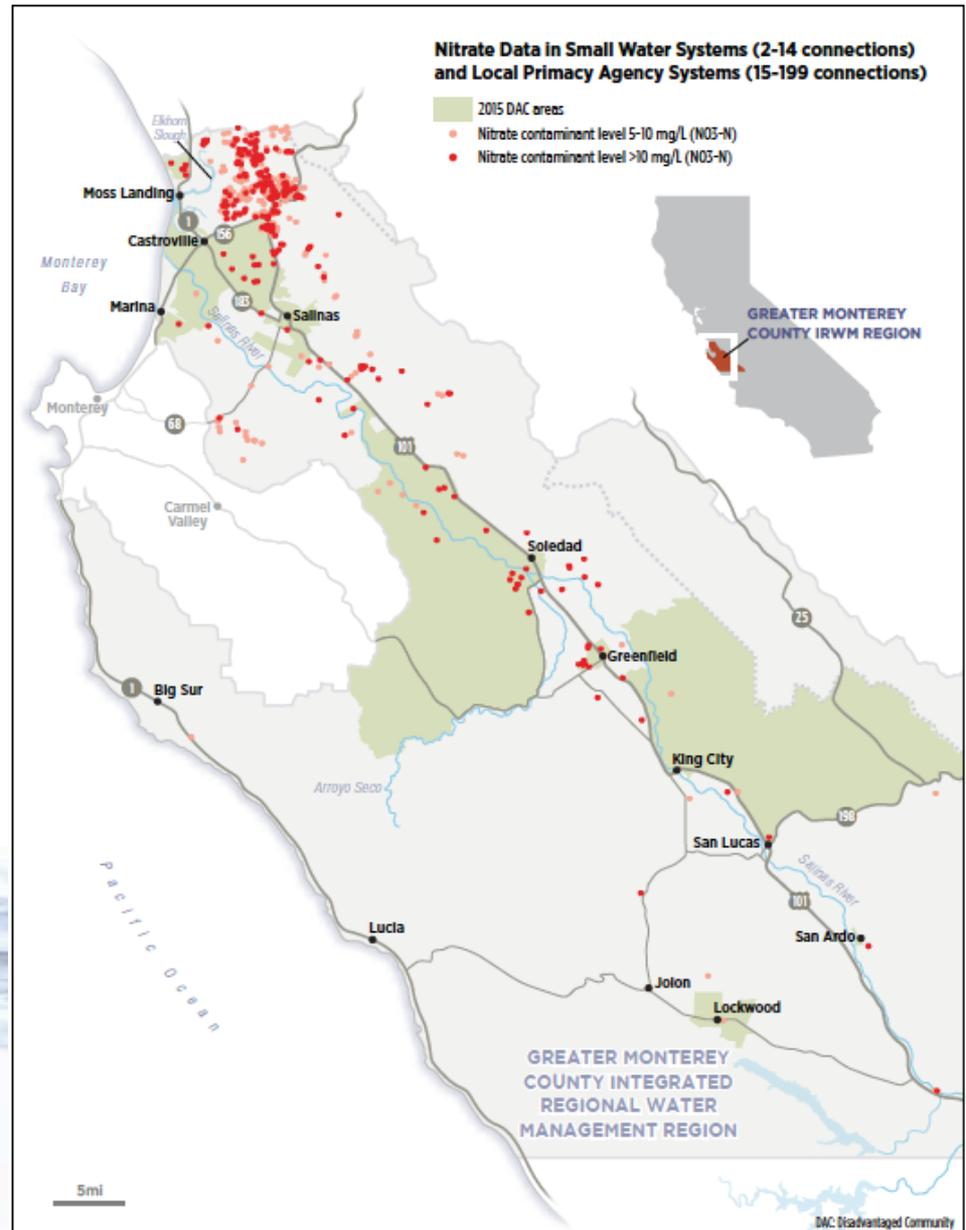
# Identifying Problems



# Identifying Problems

## Methods to identify problems

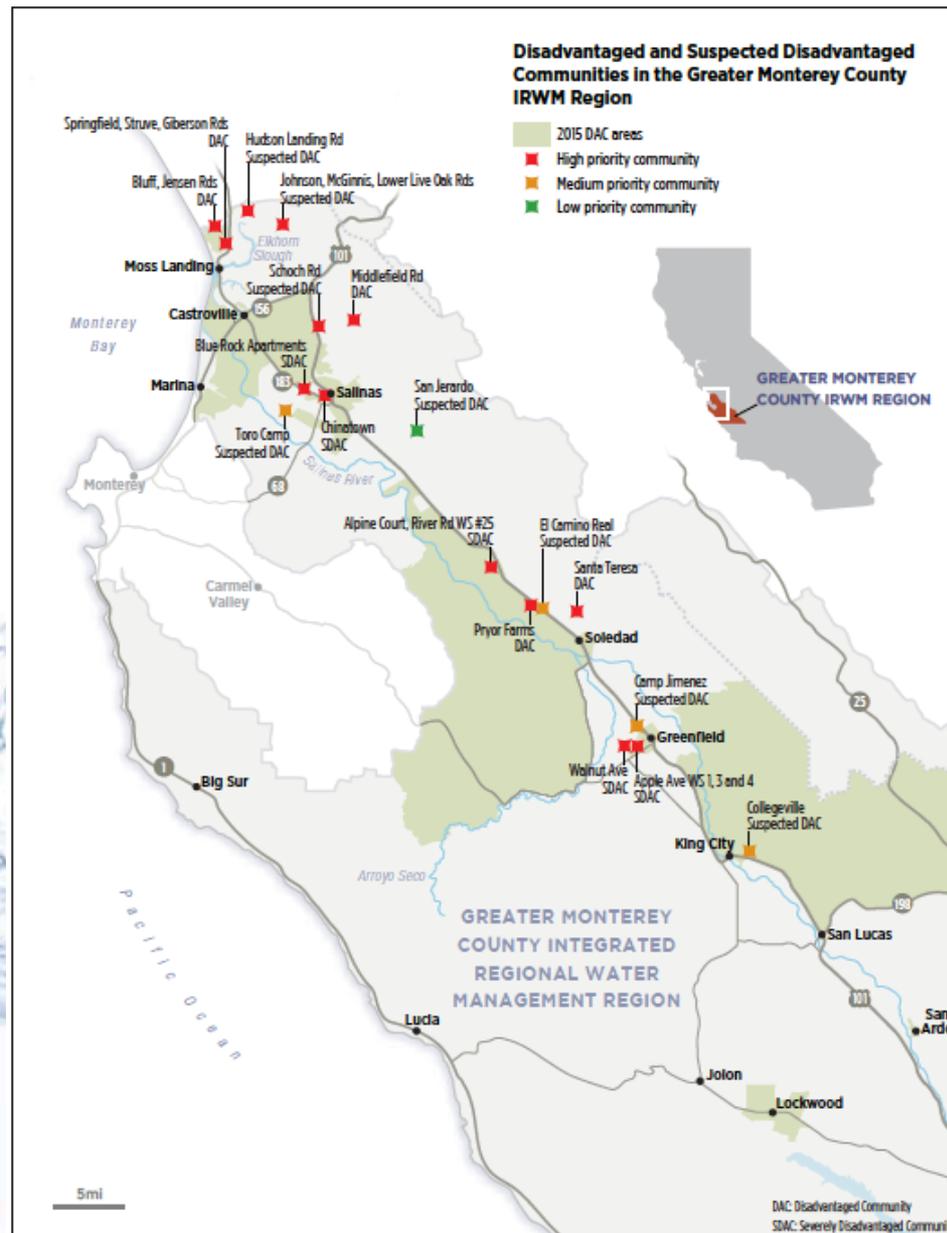
1. Small water system water quality data
2. Consultations with TAC and community members
3. Door-to-door survey of over 150 households



# Identifying Problems

## Result of Prioritization

- 13 High Priority communities
- 5 Medium Priority communities
- 2 Low priority communities

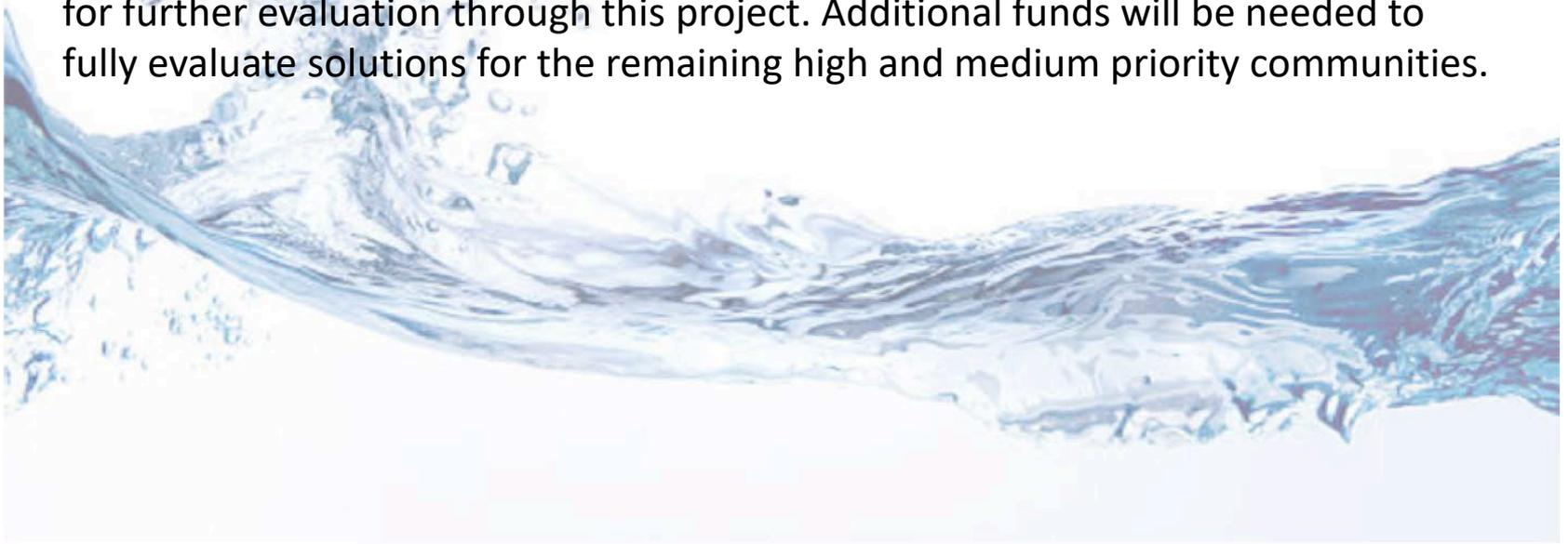


## Common problems of small rural disadvantaged communities include, for example:

- Unreliable or inadequate infrastructure
- Inability to achieve economies of scale
- Inability to recover costs
- Lack of technical, managerial, and financial capacity
- No existing legal entity to manage water system
- Dependence on a single source of water
- Lack of redundancy of system
- Geographic isolation
- Low revenues and high delinquency rates
- Small or nonexistent reserve funds

# Identifying Problems: Key Findings

1) Many more disadvantaged communities exist in the region than could be fully evaluated through this project. The Project Team identified a total of 21 disadvantaged and suspected disadvantaged communities within the region. Fourteen of these communities were classified as high priority, five were classified as medium priority, and two were classified as low priority. With the funds available, the Project Team selected seven of the high priority communities for further evaluation through this project. Additional funds will be needed to fully evaluate solutions for the remaining high and medium priority communities.



# Identifying Solutions



# Chapter 4. Identifying Solutions

Neighboring small water systems increases project size/impact/work

Community Name	Nitrate as N (mg/L) MCL=10 mg/L	Primary Community Contacts	Connections (Including Neighbors)
1. Santa Teresa	11	9	9
2. Middlefield Rd.	13	5	26
3. Schoch Rd.	14	5	44
4. Walnut Ave.	36	6	10
5. Johnson Rd.	45	10	85
6. Hudson Landing Rd.	40	15	80
7. Apple Ave.	40	20	20

## Identifying Solutions: Key Findings

- 1) *High variability of nitrate levels and other contaminants within communities.* Hexavalent chromium, 1,2,3-TCP, and bacteria were also found in some high priority communities.
- 2) *Increasing trend in nitrate levels.* While variability within communities exists, the overall trend indicates increasing nitrate levels. Some wells drilled just 5-10 years ago now show high nitrate levels.
- 3) *Need for increased community engagement.* Community outreach and engagement to bring communities into agreement on long-term solutions, and to engage neighboring systems, requires substantially more time and resources than existing funds allow. This is especially challenging when there are no legal entities in a neighborhood and when neighbors do not know each other.

## Identifying Solutions: Key Findings

4) *Need for project sponsorship.* A primary barrier to implementing long-term solutions is finding a project sponsor. Nearby water utilities are often reluctant to be project sponsors due to difficulty in getting reimbursed from funding agencies for administrative costs.

5) *Household monthly cost is one of the most significant determinants of a community's interest in participating in a long-term solution.* It is challenging to find funding sources that will cover costs not covered by the State, including lateral costs (from meter to home).

# Recommendation Highlights



## Project Sponsorship

The difficulty in finding qualified sponsors for drinking water projects for small disadvantaged communities is, statewide, a frequent and significant barrier to implementing solutions. The Project Team recommends that State funding agencies make grant requirements for disadvantaged community drinking water projects easier and more affordable for qualified entities to sponsor projects.



## Lateral Costs

While most funding sources cover infrastructure costs, lateral costs are typically not covered; as a result, a solution that may appear low cost may wind up being an unaffordable option. The Project Team recommends that State funding agencies allow for grant coverage of lateral costs for disadvantaged communities.



# Request for Central Coast Regional Water Board



## Staff Support in Project Sponsorship

The Project Team requests for the Central Coast Regional Water Board to provide staff support to work with us in addressing problems with Project Sponsorship. That might include help in identifying project sponsors, and identifying funding sources.



## Support in Lateral Costs

The Project Team requests for the Central Coast Regional Water Board to formally advocate for the inclusion and implementation of lateral costs in construction grants. As aforementioned, these costs can be a major impediment to project advancement as most DAC's cannot afford these costs.



# Questions?

Thank you!

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Horacio Amezquita, San Jerardo Cooperative, Inc.

Karen McBride, Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Moises Moreno-Rivera, Environmental Justice Coalition for Water